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Golden Gate Audubon Society

THE GULL

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## HERONS, EGRETS, AND THE MARIN ISLANDS

Our next program will begin at 7:30 p.m., **Thursday, April 11th** in Berkeley. Join wildlife photographer Philip Loring Greene for a slide show presentation of herons and egrets. Philip has been photographing herons and egrets throughout the United States for the past 15 years and has captured the magnificence and uniqueness of these birds in his photographs. Philip will describe some of the research being done in the Bay Area to learn more about these birds, including the survey and monitoring program being coordinated by biologists from the Audubon Canyon Ranch Cypress Grove Preserve using an extensive network of volunteers.

Philip Loring Greene will be joined by Terri Nevins, from the California State Coastal Conservancy, who will describe efforts underway to create a new National Wildlife Refuge for nesting herons and egrets right in San Francisco Bay. Learn about the bird life of the Marin Islands, which many of you have probably seen from afar countless times as you've driven over the Richmond Bridge.

Please join us and find out how you can help. The Northbrae Community Church is located at 942 The Alameda in Berkeley. There is plenty of parking and free refreshments.

—JOELLE BUFFA  
Program Chairman

## JUST SAY NO! LOUDLY!

Representatives of several statewide and regional groups joined in a coalition named Californians for Transportation Sense have assailed Caltrans' plans to construct toll roads throughout the state. (GGAS is a charter member, of course.) The group announced its opposition to the use of public funds to allow private companies to profit from the transportation problems in California. The toll roads are scheduled to be built in the East Bay Area, Orange Co., Riverside, and San Diego. The group charges that legislation which allows Caltrans to contract with developers was an improper use of taxpayer monies. "Caltrans' decision to have private companies build toll roads is nothing more than a backroom deal" said Richard Baker, of the Professional Engineers in California Government (PECG).

*(continued on page 62)*

## FIELD TRIPS CALENDAR

**Saturday, April 6**—Briones Regional Park.

**Wednesday, April 10**—Mini-trip to Sunol Regional Park.

For details on the above trips see *The GULL* for March.

**Saturday, April 13**—Beginners' trip to Bothe-Napa Valley State Park. Meet at 9 a.m. in the parking lot. This is a particularly beautiful park in the spring, with migrating warblers and vireos, Winter Wrens and, if we're lucky—Pileated Woodpeckers. We will walk about four to five miles and bird mostly by ear. This trip is especially good for beginners.

From the East Bay drive north on I-80 beyond Vallejo and take the Napa exit. Follow Hwy. 29 to St. Helena. The entrance to the park is on the left just beyond the Ole Bale Mill north of St. Helena. From the West Bay take Hwy. 101 north; just before Novato exit on Hwy. 37 and go east to the junction with Hwy. 121; turn left and continue on 121 until it joins Hwy. 29 near Napa, then continue north on 29 to the park.

Bring lunch and liquids. Rain cancels trip. Please carpool if possible. Leader: Gene Hull (525-6893). \$(✓)

**Saturday, April 13**—Presidio. Meet at 9 a.m. in the overflow parking lot for Baker Beach, off Lincoln Blvd.—next to the Golden Gate Army Reserve Center (MUNI bus #29 stops across the street). Our morning walk will take place along Lobos Creek, the last free flowing stream in the city and county of San Francisco. In addition to birding in this riparian habitat, emphasis will be placed on geology, history, and culture of the area. (With the conver-

sion of the Presidio to a unit of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Lobos Creek, and its role in the park, is now a focus of public hearings.) The walk will continue to Mountain Lake and return to the Baker Beach area by noon. Lunch is optional. Leader: Eve Iversen (232-2817)

**Saturday, April 20**—Join **Dan Murphy's team** and be one of his many observers (mob) on the Birdathon. See page 66 for details.

**Saturday, April 20**—Mines, Rd., Livermore. Meet at 8 a.m. in the parking lot of the Nob Hill Shopping Center. Take I-580 east and turn right on No. Livermore Exit. Continue south two miles to the Nob Hill Shopping Center at So. Livermore and Pacific in Livermore. From there we will caravan on mountain roads to Patterson. Bring food and liquids. We can expect to see Northern Orioles, Lewis' Woodpeckers, and Phainopeplas in this habitat. Roadrunners and Wild Turkeys have also been seen on this trip. Those who want to can continue with the group until dark. Leader: Art Edwards (447-3720). (✓)

**Sunday, April 21**—Hayward Regional Shoreline. Meet at 8 a.m. in the parking lot at the Interpretive Center. From the East Bay take Hwy. 880 south and exit on Hwy. 92 toward the San Mateo Bridge. Turn right off 92 onto Clawiter Rd., then a quick left onto Breakwater Ave. Continue to the end of the road—if you drive into the Bay you've gone too far. From San Francisco take Hwy. 101 south, exit on Hwy. 92 and cross the bridge. Turn off at the Eden Landing/Clawiter Rd. exit, then go left to Breakwater Ave. This

is a good opportunity to see shorebirds in their breeding plumage. Bring lunch and liquids. Leader: Rusty Scalf (444-6232). (✓)

**Saturday, April 27**—Third Annual Point Reyes National Seashore All-day Spring Birding Blitz. (Joint activity: GGAS/Nat. Park Service.) Meet at 8 a.m. at Five Brooks trailhead parking lot, approximately five miles south of Olema on Hwy. 1. We will bird Five Brooks Pond Area, Limantour Split, Drakes Beach, Chimney Rock, and Point Reyes, ending at Bear Valley for a multi-habitat trip. Bring water, food, and layer clothes for variable weather. Leader: Leon Abrams (459-6366, work) (843-4107, home). (✓)

**Saturday/Sunday, April 27-28**—Big Basin State Park. Meet at 5 a.m. (DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME) on Sunday at Park Headquarters.

Everyone who attended the GGAS monthly meeting last November was fascinated by the program that Researcher Nancy Nasland presented on Marbled Murrelets. Here's your chance to observe these curious birds in real life. They live at sea, but nest in old growth firs and redwoods, where they can be seen flying overhead just before sunrise as they exchange nest sitting duties with their mates.

It's just a five minute walk from park headquarters to the best area to watch and listen for murrelets. Then, later in the morning we will take a 40 minute drive to Ano Nuevo Bay to look for murrelets in their feeding grounds, as well as other waterfowl and shorebirds. Or you could go birding on your own. Or you could go back to bed.

Because of the early hour of meeting on Sunday morning (set your clocks one hour ahead) it is recommended that participants arrive on Saturday and plan to camp overnight. A group campsite, "The Sky Meadow Group," has been reserved for GGAS. (The \$60 camp-

ground fee will be shared by participants. The exact amount will be determined by the number who show up, but not to exceed \$12 per car.) People may opt to find their own campsites on a first come first served basis at \$14 per site, but to be sure of a site, and to coordinate activities, we advise that you take advantage of the Group Campground. Space is limited, however, so reservations are necessary. Call Russ Wilson: 524-2399.

Allow about two and one-half hours driving time from the S.F./Oakland area. Take Hwy. 9 out of Saratoga to Hwy. 236. Leader: Nancy Nasland \$ (✓)

**Saturday, May 4**—Birding by Ear in Briones Regional Park. Meet at 8 a.m. at the west entrance to Briones Regional Park off Bear Creek Rd. Take Hwy. 24 east and exit on the Orinda turnoff, then turn left and go back under the freeway on Camino Pablo. Continue northwest about two miles to Bear Creek Rd. Turn right and drive about two miles to the Briones Regional Park entrance on the right. Meet in the parking area on the left just beyond the fee booth. Be prepared to hike five miles with lunch and liquids through hilly terrain. Be sure to bring a hat or sunscreen. We will study the songs and calls of common breeding birds of the Eat Bay. Leader: Dave Cornman. (825-2106). (✓)

**Sunday, May 5**—Point Reyes National Seashore. Meet at 8 a.m. at Five Brooks Stable trailhead, about five miles south of Olema on Hwy. 1. We will look for birds at the pond, then car-shuttle to Park Headquarters. From there we will bird on our way back to Five Brooks, about five miles through varied habitat. Bring lunch and liquids. Leaders: Gloria Markowitz and Ken Ackerman (892-2910). (✓)

**Sunday, May 5**—Wildcat Canyon Regional Park. Meet at 8 a.m. by the Arlington Clubhouse on Arlington

Blvd. (next to the tennis courts between Brewster Dr. and Thors Bay Rd.) in El Cerrito. From there we will make a short drive to the trailhead on Rifle Range Rd. Bring a lunch and liquids for a six mile hike.

We will encounter hills as we walk a transect of the canyon to bird in brushlands, oak woodlands, riparian stream-sides and grasslands. We anticipate seeing a few late migrants and a good representation of nesting birds including Grasshopper Sparrows and Lazuli Buntings. We will also identify common trees of the area. People with allergies should be aware that we will encounter grassy conditions. Hiking boots advisable. The trip will end at 2 p.m. Leader: Malcolm Sproul (376-8945). (✓)

**Wednesday, May 8**—Mini-trip to Briones Regional Park. Meet at the park at 9:30 a.m. Take Hwy. 24 east and exit on the Orinda turnoff, then turn left and go back under the freeway on Camino Pablo. Continue northwest about two miles to Bear Creek Rd. Turn right and drive about two miles to the Briones Regional Park entrance on the right.

We should see Northern Orioles, Lark Sparrows, Ash-throated Flycatchers and Lazuli Buntings. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (351-9301) and Jean-Marie Spoelman.

**Saturday, May 11**—Jack London State Park. Meet at 8 a.m. in the parking lot on the right. From the East Bay drive north on I-80 beyond Vallejo; exit on Hwy. 37 and go west to Hwy. 121. From San Francisco drive north on Hwy. 101 beyond San Rafael; exit on Hwy. 37 and go east to Hwy. 121.

At the junction of Hwy. 121 go north about seven miles to Arnold Drive and continue north on Arnold to Glen Ellen, then follow signs to Jack London State Park. Allow one and one quarter hours driving time from the S.F./Oakland area. We should see a variety of woodland birds including three kinds of

vireos. Nesting boxes for Western Bluebirds will be checked. Bring lunch and liquids. Leader: Rusty Scalf (444-6232). \$(✓)

### Plan Ahead:

**Saturday, May 18**—Bouverie Preserve (Reservations required).

**Friday-Sunday May 31-June 2**—Yosemite. Birding by Ear. Leader: Dave Cornman.

**Saturday-Sunday, June 15-16**—Mono Basin. Leaders: Helen and Paul Green.

**Friday-Sunday, June 21-23**—Lassen Nat. Park. Leaders: Dan and Joan Murphy.

**Trips marked with \$** go to parks or other sites that require an entrance fee.

**Carpooling** arrangements will be attempted for trips marked (✓).

**Problems:** If you need a ride or can take a passenger, or if you need information and have difficulty reaching a field trip leader, call Russ Wilson (524-2399).

—FIELD TRIPS COMMITTEE

## Use "Line 50" To Help California's Endangered Species.



FORM 540 California Tax Form	
You may make a contribution of \$1 or more :	
48 Alzheimer's Disease	• 48 _____
49 Senior Citizens	• 49 _____
50 ENDANGERED SPECIES	• 50 <u>75</u>
51 Child Abuse	• 51 _____
52 Olympics	• 52 _____
53 Vietnam Veterans	• 53 _____

Pictured here: *San Joaquin Kit Fox*

## OBSERVATIONS: FEBRUARY, 1991

I have prodigious indisposition to numbers, particularly species numbers, as in "lists." But it's a dislike I'm willing to forego when it comes to BIRD-ATHONS, those 24-hour frantic extravaganzas designed to test the skills of manic birders and raise funds for worthy beneficiaries. The totally committed sally forth before dawn, and at breakneck speeds follow carefully planned routes designed to cover the widest variety of habitats and produce the maximum number of species in a 24-hour period, allowing them to drag home triumphantly and tally up at the end of the day. The truly committed follow some variation of the above. Last year's winning team of DeSante, Green, Shuford and Stallcup did not leave the confines of Marin County and saw 185 species despite the fact that the coast was foggy; dreams of the perfect day with 200 species do not seem unreasonable. The ecologically concerned can eschew the automobile and opt for a walking birdathon—lower totals for the day, but a sense of moral superiority that makes up for the relative lack of numbers.

As might be inferred, we are preparing to embark on Birdathon 1991, our all-out effort to raise money for the Mono Lake Legal Fund. It's a winning situation for all concerned: the participants see a lot of birds; Mono Lake gets saved from the greedy water grabbers; and the sponsors bask in the warm glow of the righteousness of a tax-deductible contribution. It seems so simple—if every member of Marin Audubon and Golden Gate Audubon gave just \$10, we would raise more than \$80,000. So cough up gladly . . . and while you're at

it, support the Not-so-Oldsquaws with a generous pledge.

\* \* \* \* \*

This February seems to have been particularly ho-hum on the bird front. It doesn't appear to be attributable to anything specific—sometimes these months just happen.

A Laysan Albatross was seen 32 miles off the San Mateo Coast on the 18th (SFB). A 45-minute sea-watch from the Cliff House on the 2nd produced twelve Northern Fulmars, a Black-vented Shearwater and a Pomerine Jaeger (ASH). Other seabird sightings included a Red-necked Grebe off Pt. Richmond on the 10th (SGI), hardly the ocean environment in which this bird is generally found; and a Marbled Murrelet off Bolinas on the 3rd (KH).

The Cattle Egret remained near the aviary at Lake Merritt (JMR, mob). On the 11th, an **Emperor Goose** was found on a rock just off the outer headlands at Pt. Reyes (PP) by a researcher counting Elephant Seals; the two Emperor Geese on SE Farallon are thought to have left on the 1st and the 8th, so it's possible that this individual is one of those birds. The Tufted Duck remained at Sutro Baths through the month (mob); another was found at Princeton Harbor among the scaup on the 9th (JMD); and a third was seen at Warm Springs on the 12th (LRF).

An adult Bald Eagle was spotted at Crystal Springs on the 4th (RSTh); the dark-morph Northern Harrier was seen again at Gray Lodge on the 18th (KSm); and an adult **Northern Goshawk** was reported from El Granada on the 26th (BS fide RSTh).

Rock Sandpipers seem to be making a habit of the San Mateo coast: one at Pebble Beach (JMD); another at Princeton Harbor (PJM); and a possible third individual at Bean Hollow State Beach

(RMrr). A **Ruff**, found at Moonglow Dairy on the 10th, may have wintered through from the fall (HG). The immature Franklin's Gull remained at Palo Alto Baylands thru the 4th (mob); another, possibly the same bird, was discovered in Milpitas on the 14th (MiF, mob). The Santa Cruz Little Gull was last reported on the 6th (PRa). Glaucous Gulls continued to be seen in unusually good numbers.

Allen's Hummingbirds are back—the first blush of spring in the midst of winter. The Yellow-bellied Sapsucker continued to be seen in Nicasio (mob); A Red-naped Sapsucker was found on Gazos Creek Rd., San Mateo County, on the 16th and was reported thru the 20th (BS, RSTh, MLR). A Clark's Nutcracker, a fair distance from his usual alpine haunts, was in Portola State Park on the 9th (BS fide RSTh). The Gray Catbird was last reported from Pajaro Dunes on the 9th (mob); the Bendire's Thrasher remained in Lodi (mob). A bit out of our area, one hundred sixty-six **Bohemian Waxwings** were reported from Lake City, Modoc County, on the 18th (CGR) and another five from Susanville on the same day along with a Northern Shrike at Honey Lake (RN).

The warbler list is down to a mere two holdovers: the Palm Warbler at Lake Merced, last reported the 6th (MLR); and the MacGillivray's Warbler at GG Park (mob). Last word of the Bolinas Summer Tanager was on the 3rd (KH). The Clay-colored Sparrow continued to frequent the feeder in Half Moon Bay thru the month (GDeg). Five Vesper Sparrows were seen in Milpitas on the 12th (AWi, JMS); and the Harris' sparrow was reported thru the 2nd in Lodi (DGY). A **Snow Bunting** visited a feeder near Quincy mid-month (BWA & LWA fide KM). The earliest ever Northern Oriole in Alamo

showed up on the 9th (JRW). And last, but hardly least, a Cassin's Finch popped up at a feeder in Berkeley from the 21st to the 26th (HG).

**OBSERVERS:** Stephen F. Bailey, J. Michael Danzenbaker, Gary Deghi, Leora Feeney, Mike Feighner, Steve Glover, Helen Green, Keith Hansen, Alan S. Hopkins, many observers, Robert Merrill, K. Moore, Rod Norden, Peter Pyle, Peter Radcliff, Clifford G. Richer, Jean M. Richmond, Mary Louise Rosegay, Barry Sauppe, Kathleen Smallfield, Ronald S. Thorn, Bill Watkins, Lee Watkins, Jerry R. White, Anna Wilcox, David G. Yee.

—ANN DEWART

## APRIL IS AUDUBON MONTH

National Audubon Society has declared April to be Audubon Month. Emphasis is to be on marine conservation: **SAVE THE OCEANS.**

Marine pollution begins at home. For example, people dump as much automobile oil into ditches and storm drains as what poured from the *Exxon Valdez* into Prince William Sound. We have little control over tankers, and no control over the hazards of war, but we do have control over our own actions and some influence on the enforcement of laws. Audubon members, in inland areas as well as coastal areas have a vital role to play in fighting marine pollution. Prevention also begins at home.

## POINT PINOLE REGIONAL SHORELINE

Just in from the staff at PPRS is a first draft checklist of birds seen at Point Pinole. Copies are available there, and birders are urged to report sightings to assist in their record-keeping and contribute to a comprehensive checklist.

## CONSERVATION NOTES

### ARCTIC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

#### A GOOD NEWS/ BAD NEWS STORY

**THE GOOD NEWS** is—The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska still remains a pristine, complete, unspoiled ecosystem, critical calving area for the Porcupine caribou, and a prime nesting area for waterfowl and other birds.

**THE BAD NEWS** is—President Bush's National Energy Policy. This recently drafted Policy calls for increasing domestic output of fossil fuels in the US, rather than promoting programs to reduce energy consumption. It contains virtually no incentives for energy conservation nor provisions for stiffer auto efficiency standards. Worst of all, it proposes to open 1.5 million acres of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) to oil exploration.

**THE GOOD NEWS** is—The Administrations's Policy is SO BAD that it has little chance of being passed as legislation by Congress.

Somewhat **BAD NEWS** is—An Energy Bill S341 introduced by Louisiana Senator Bennett Johnston, while

it has many conservation measures and provisions to increase fuel efficiency standards, it would also open the Arctic NWR to oil exploration. Because of Senator Johnston's leadership position on the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, S341 is likely to be given serious attention this month.

**BETTER NEWS**—Is Barbara Boxer's Bill HR446 and the companion Senate Bill S279. These Bills call for increased fuel efficiency standards that would save more oil than we could get from the Arctic NWR.

**THE BEST NEWS OF ALL**—Would be passage of Wilderness Refuge Bills HR39 and S39, which would designate the Arctic NWR a Wilderness Area, closed to oil exploration and drilling.

So what can you do to insure that the **GOOD NEWS** gets the last word?

1) Write or call your Congressional Representative and encourage him to co-sponsor HR39, which would designate the Arctic NWR Wilderness closed to oil exploration. Many districts have had their Representatives co-sponsor HR-39 in the past, and it is critical that we ask them to be sure that they have co-sponsored in this session which began in January. In the confusion around the Middle East many Congressmen have not remembered to co-sponsor this time.

Address: US House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

2) Write Senator John Seymour and Senator Alan Cranston asking them to remove the provision in S341 which would open the Arctic NWR to oil exploration. Ask them also to co-sponsor S39 and to support S279. Stress that decreasing energy consumption provides a better long-term solution to decreasing our dependence on foreign oil. Since Senator Seymour just recently took Senator Wilson's place, it is important that he hears that his



SAVE THE  
ARCTIC REFUGE  
FOR WILDLIFE

constituents support wilderness designation for the Arctic NWR.

Address: US Senate, Washington, DC 20510

To phone your Representative or Senator call the Capitol switchboard (202) 224-3121 and ask for his or her office.

As support to your position, remind them that at most there is only 180 days supply of oil in the Arctic NWR at our present rate of consumption, and only a 19% chance that there is even that much! Any energy policy which just looks at increasing supply without decreasing demand will never be a long-term solution. The US has only 4% of the world's oil and we consume 25%. Countries with equally high standards of living in Europe and Japan have twice the energy efficiency.

—JOELLE BUFFA

## MONO LAKE UPDATE

Mono Lake now stands at just below 6375 feet, a level which exposes Negit Island and almost connects the land to Java and Twain islets, all used as nesting sites by the California Gulls. The coyotes now have easy access to Negit and will be able to plunder the nests of the gulls which are just returning to the lake to begin another breeding season.

Because of the drought Mono Lake will continue to fall this year, even if Judge Finney of the El Dorado Superior Court rules in favor of Mono Lake. Potentially the lake could drop by two feet, depending upon the Sierra runoff. The beauty, abundance, diversity and public enjoyment of Mono Lake could be significantly reduced.

One of the longest and most expensive legal battles of the Mono Lake Committee finally concluded before Judge Finney on January 17, 1991. The Committee now awaits the decision on

the preliminary injunction to raise and maintain Mono Lake above 6377 feet. This ruling will undoubtedly influence the State Water Resources Control Board, which has the ultimate authority to decide stream flows and lake level by September, 1993. This process, too, will be a costly one for the Mono Lake Committee.

Meanwhile, the Committee has continued to present various proposals to the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power: identified new sources of replacement water for the city (conservation and reclamation projects); secured \$60 million in state funds to assist Los Angeles in paying for development of replacement water.

Mono Lake still needs our help. State Water Board hearings and continuing legal battles lie before us. We must not sacrifice environmental qualities which are not replaceable, even in the face of a five-year drought, while there are still alternatives to be pursued.

—HELEN GREEN

Mono Lake Committee Board

## WETLANDS VICTORY IN LESLIE SALT CASE

The United States Supreme Court handed environmentalists a victory on February 25, 1991, effectively upholding a decision of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit that gives substantial protection to seasonal wetlands. The Appeals Court ruled last year that the Army Corps of Engineers may regulate development of property accumulating standing water during California's rainy season, because the seasonal wetlands created are "other waters of the United States" under the Clean Water Act and are sufficiently related to interstate commerce on account of the impact on migratory birds and endangered species. The Justices'



vote not to grant a writ of certiorari in the case of *Leslie Salt v. U.S.* ends Leslie Salt's attempt to have the Appeals Court decision overturned.

The case involved land on the margin of San Francisco Bay, adjacent to a National Wildlife Refuge, most of which had been used at one time for salt crystallization and disposal of wastes from salt production. Salt marsh habitat gradually developed on portions of the property after construction of culverts and the opening of floodgates on nearby properties. Abandoned salt crystallizers and waste pits on the property collect rainwater seasonally, and migratory birds are attracted to the standing water. The endangered salt marsh harvest mouse uses the property. The landowner was ordered by the Corps of Engineers to stop drainage work. The landowner asserted that the property was not under the Corps' regulatory jurisdiction, because no portion of the property contained "waters of the United States" and the wetlands were not adjacent to waters of the United States. The landowner won the case in the trial court. On appeal of the trial court decision by National Audubon and Save San Francisco Bay Association, the Appeals Court decided against the landowner and ruled that the seasonally wet portions of the property were "other waters of the United States" under the Clean Water Act even in the absence of any natural hydrological connection with navigable waters nearby. The Appeals Court also ruled that the portions of the property that had become tidal wetlands over time were subject to Corps regulation, even though governmental agencies had been involved in the culvert building that flooded the property, and the wetlands created were "natural." The Supreme Court decision not to hear the

case leaves the Appeals Court decision standing.

Of great significance is the Appeals Court's determination that the Army Corps of Engineers may regulate development of seasonal wetlands that are not of entirely "natural" origin, even if there is no physical connection to open water, so long as migratory birds or endangered species are involved. The precedent is significant enough that we should be on the lookout for an attempt, by regulatory changes or amendments to the Clean Water Act, to undermine this additional wetlands protection.

—STEVEN MARGOLIN

## EPA FINE: PORT OF OAKLAND

The US Environmental Protection Agency fined the Port of Oakland \$150,000 Feb. 28th for violations in 1988 for illegal dredging and ocean disposition of toxic spoils. "The case involves serious environmental offenses—dredging contaminated sediment and disposing of it in the ocean—in clear violation of express conditions in the dredging permit issued to the Port of Oakland" said Daniel W. McGovern, EPA's regional administrator.

Bravo, EPA! It is especially shameful when a public agency willfully trashes the environment. Seems like we've had trouble with these guys before.

## THE REDWOOD QUILT

The fundraising project for the EPIC lawsuit and the Sierra Club, The Redwood Quilt, was a success to the extent that \$20,000 went to the lawsuit and an additional \$5,000 to the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund. The suits are actively being pressed by San Francisco

attorney Tom Lippe and Oakland attorney Joe Brecher.

The winner of the quilt was Margaret Kirk of Carmel, who bought her ticket at GWS Galleries of Carmel. (Note-cards showing the quilt, beautifully reproduced by Bug Press of Arcata, are for sale at New Pieces, 1597 Solano Ave., Berkeley.)

Current status of suits funded by this effort:

**EPIC v. MAXXAM**—The case had been dismissed as moot, because Pacific Lumber agreed not to harvest beyond the trees that were cut prior to the injunction obtained by EPIC, and because the California Department of Forestry had changed its procedures since the suit was filed. Mr. Lippe had appealed, asking attorney's fees because the CDF changed its rules because of the suit. If fees are recovered the payment of funds from the quilt will be returned to EPIC for use in future litigation.

**SIERRA CLUB v. BOARD OF FORESTRY**—is on appeal, with a stay on timber harvesting on the plan until the appeals Court rules. Favorable ruling is expected.

The quilt makers, the Sierra Club, Audubon Chapters, our own Katherine Ritter, Barbara Rivenes and Mildred Bennett, and many others are to be congratulated on another success.

## FOR WHOM DO THESE ROADS TOLL?

*(continued from page 53)*

"This policy was made in a vacuum with no public input." Other concerns of the coalition include:

- The Bay Area project is slated to be built on environmentally sensitive areas and farmlands.
- The developers will be allowed to condemn property and then receive huge profits. For example, the Bay

Area project receives a 21.5 percent, plus expenses, overhead, operating costs to build the project, and there are programs to increase the 21.5 percent rate of return on the investment.

- The developers will personally profit from the use of public funds to finance some of the toll road construction.
- Profits from the Bay Area project will go directly to the Banque Nationale de Paris and Westpac Banking Corp. of Australia.
- Toll road developers have been given exclusive authority to determine fares with no oversight from the Public Utility Commission.
- Taxpayers could become liable for accidents that occur on poorly constructed private toll roads.

Authored by Assemblyman Bill Baker (R-Danville) in 1989, AB 680 allows Caltrans to build four toll road "demonstration Projects." This was a last minute deal which was part of the 1989 Transportation Management Plan. There were no public hearings on the toll road proposal.

A recent poll by the San Francisco Chronicle suggests that Californians are overwhelmingly (2-to-1) opposed to toll roads. The coalition supports the efforts of Senator Bill Lockyer (D-Hayward) to limit public funding of toll road facilities (SB 144).

With the recent increases in Federal and State gas taxes, alternative kinds of funding for transportation, such as private exploitation, are not needed. "New transportation projects should be directed to providing transit alternatives to existing urban areas. The broad-based coalition," said a spokesman, "favors finding sensible transportation solutions for California and points out that building new private roads across the wetlands is not an answer."



# BAY BIRDDATHON 1991

## MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

### GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY

"Half a dozen little mountain brooks flow into Mono Lake," said Mark Twain, "but not a stream of any kind flows out of it. What it does with its surplus water is a dark and bloody mystery." There is no mystery today, for there is no surplus water. The lake that is so alive with grebes, phalaropes, California gulls and snowy plovers, may soon become a dead sea.

During 40 years of water diversions by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, the lake dropped 45 vertical feet. Its volume decreased by half and its salinity doubled. Although diversions have been stopped temporarily by court action, the level continues to fall due to low rainfall. As the level falls, salinity continues to increase. In as little as 10 to 25 years, the lake will become too salty for the survival of brine shrimp, the crucial food supply for Mono Lake's immense flocks of birds.

# BAY BIRDATHON 1991

## GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY

## MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

### PLEDGE FORM

YES, I WANT TO HELP SAVE MONO LAKE!

I PLEDGE TO SPONSOR ONE (OR MORE) OF THE FOLLOWING BIRDATHON TEAMS AT THE RATE OF \$ \_\_\_\_\_ PER SPECIES. CONTACT ME AFTER THE APRIL 20 BIRDATHON TO COLLECT MY PLEDGE.

_____	ALLEN'S HUMMERS. Allen Fish, Joe DiDonato, John Keane, Sally Mills, Dave Riensche.	_____	MINES ROADRUNNERS. Janet Walker, Peter Allen, Elizabeth Gluck, & participants in Marin Audubon's April 20 Mines Road field trip; call Peter at 892-8063 for information.
_____	BODEGA BAY BUSHTWITS. Nancy Conzett, Betty Burrige, Martha Davis.	_____	MURPHY'S MOB. Dan Murphy & you, if you show up for this field trip in San Francisco with Golden Gate Audubon; call Dan at 564-0074 for details.
_____	CASUAL VAGRANTS. Janet Linse, Mark Homrighausen.	_____	NOT-SO-OLDSQUAWS. Ann Dewart, Helen Green, Lina Jane Prairie, Emilie Strauss, Janet Wessel.
_____	CHEEP TRILLS. Dave Quady, Bob Lewis, Pat O'Brien.	_____	OLD COOTS. Paul Green, David Rice, Humphrey Clayton, Peter Watkins.
_____	DAVE DeSANTE.	_____	LAS PAJARO-THONERS. Pat Gannon, Joan Davidson, Reyla Graber.
_____	ENVIRONMENTALISTERS. Alan Hopkins, Jan Anderson, Lee Elias, Mark Elliott.	_____	SO-WHAT OWLS. Steve & Renee Margolin, Arthur Feinstein, Ruth Vose, Barbara Salzman, Bruce Walker, Jean Thomas
_____	GREAT BASIN BUSH-BEATERS (a Mono Lake team). Melanie Findling, Joan Humphrey, Shannon Nelson, Bob Damschroder & friends.	_____	
_____	HUFFING PUFFINS. Tom Spillane, Nicki Spillane, Pete White, Dolores White & friends.	_____	
_____	LIFEBRANCE'S GOLDFINCHES. Les	_____	

Wimpfheimer, Dan Singer, Donna Lion, David Holway.

MENDOLARKS. Dianne Sierra, Chris Patillo, Barbara Jording & Liz Wharton.

MILLS COLLEGE. John Harris, Kiyomi Cohn, Kezha Hatier, Francis Wittman.

URBAN TYRANTS. Alan Ridley, Josiah Clarke, Ivan Samuels.

WATERFOUL (an all-EPA team). Harrison Karr, Clyde Morris, Wendy Pulling, Paul Jones.

WING DINGERS. Russ Wilson, David George & friends.

WANDERING TATTLERS. Tom White, Rosilyn Bazurto, Julie Lane, Penny Watson.

YOSEMITE. Karen Allen & Friends.

I WANT TO SUPPORT THE TEAM WITH THE HIGHEST SPECIES TOTAL AT \$ \_\_\_\_\_ PER SPECIES.

I WANT TO SUPPORT THE TEAM WITH THE LOWEST SPECIES TOTAL AT \$ \_\_\_\_\_ PER SPECIES.

I PLEDGE A TOTAL CONTRIBUTION OF \$ \_\_\_\_\_, PAYABLE AFTER THE BIRDATHON.

I ENCLOSE A CONTRIBUTION OF \$ \_\_\_\_\_. (Enclose check payable to Marin Audubon or Golden Gate Audubon.)

I WILL LEAD MY OWN TEAM AND WILL GATHER PLEDGES OF AT LEAST \$1.00 PER SPECIES.

ALL CONTRIBUTIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE.

NAME:

ADDRESS:

PHONE:



Snowy Plover and chick.  
Keith Hansen

FOLD FORM & SEND TO ADDRESS ON REVERSE

and located its 33,000 nesting California gulls, and protect its own eggs and chickens. The gulls are the reason for the island until 1985, after a very wet winter which raised the lake level high enough to cover the land bridge.

The Mono Lake Committee's long and arduous battle to preserve Mono Lake is far from won. Golden Gate Audubon Society and Marin Audubon Society have again joined together in the National Audubon Birdathon to raise funds for the Mono Lake Committee and National Audubon's Mono Lake Legal Fund. At least 80% of the net proceeds will benefit Mono Lake. The balance will be used for Chapter activities.

Please help us save Mono Lake. Be as generous as you can.

Return address:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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PLACE  
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HERE

BAY BIRDATHON 1991  
C/O LIZABETH GLUCK  
206 CASCADE DRIVE  
FAIRFAX, CA 94930

## THAT NICE WOMAN

When I first started birdwatching a couple of years ago and, as is wont to happen among beginners, the conversation would turn a bit dispiritedly to twitching and listing and traveling around the world in search of birds and the attendant expenses thereof, some experienced soul would invariably bring up the story of the woman who spent years watching sparrows in her back yard and was able to provide valuable data and insight to the scientific community. There was nothing particularly condescending in the telling, but my mind conjured up a vigorous hausfrau in San Jose who jotted down times and amounts of seed consumed as White-crowned Sparrows came to her feeders. Recently I went in search of information about the patron saint of our bird-athon and discovered the sparrow lady was none other than Margaret Nice, trained biologist, ornithologist and child psychologist who, in the course of raising five children, devoted thousands of hours in the 1920's and 30's to watching the Song Sparrows on her back acre in Columbus, Ohio. She recognized the importance of following the behavior of identifiable individuals (she banded them) and over the years articulated and documented, among other things, the phenomenon of territoriality in Song Sparrow breeding. Her methods and her conclusions form much of the basis of modern behavioral ornithology. *The Watcher at the Nest*, published in 1939, remains a remarkable and readable account of inspired research. She is a worthy exemplar for our most worthy endeavor.

—ANN DEWART

## BURROWING OWLS A CALIFORNIA CENSUS

The Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*) is a characteristic species

of flat, open grasslands at lower elevations nearly throughout California. The species has been undergoing a general population decline in California (and elsewhere in its range) for at least the past 60 years. Indeed, as long ago as 1944, Joseph Grinnell and Alden H. Miller documented the decline of Burrowing Owls in California and attributed it to "roadside shooting, anti-'vermin' campaigns, [and the] elimination of ground squirrels—hence of nesting places for these owls."

Within the past 20 years, however, the decline of Burrowing Owls in California appears to have accelerated, apparently as a result of habitat loss caused by the increased residential and commercial development of land that has paralleled the phenomenal growth of California's human population. It now appears that certain characteristics of suitable Burrowing Owl nesting habitat (open, flat to rolling grassland at lower elevations) are very similar to the characteristics of prime land for residential and commercial development. Because current indicators predict that California's extraordinary human population growth will continue, or even accelerate, during this decade and into the next century, we can expect further declines in the amount of available Burrowing Owl habitat and, thus, in the size of Burrowing Owl populations in California.

The Burrowing Owl is currently classified by the California Department of Fish and Game as a "species of special concern." While such a classification does provide a stimulus for further study of the species, it does not, by itself, provide enhanced legal protection. Effective and substantial protection in this regard can only be supplied if the species is classified as "threatened" or "endangered." While a number of individuals and organizations have informally suggested that

such classifications may indeed be warranted, adequate data on which to base estimates of local, regional and total population sizes of Burrowing Owls in California, and projections of potential changes in population size, are not currently available. It is evident, therefore, that a census of California's Burrowing Owl populations, and a follow-up program to monitor these populations, is justified.

A program of censusing California's Burrowing Owls has a number of attractive components. First, by utilizing recent sophisticated advances in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and detailed remote sensing (satellite) data, the development of a powerful technique for defining the critical habitat characteristics of Burrowing Owls, and for estimating the total amount and distribution of potentially suitable Burrowing Owl habitat can be pioneered. Because remote sensing data now extend back for nearly 20 years, we can use this historical record to plot the rate of habitat loss for the species, and even to predict the future date when all Burrowing Owl habitat will be gone unless efforts are undertaken to preserve the habitat. The development of this remote sensing/GIS technique is important, therefore, as it offers great potential for aiding conservation efforts for many other species as well.

Second, Burrowing Owls are easily identified and relatively easily counted, and are favorites for many bird watchers. As a result, large locally-based volunteer efforts can be mobilized that can provide a statistically valid sampling of the population, and can provide an effective field test for defining the habitat characteristics of the species as determined from the GIS analysis.

Third, an understanding of the local distributions and centers of abundance of Burrowing Owls will provide extremely valuable information on poten-

tial distributions of other species that occur in the same habitat, including other bird species and other less visible species, such as various small mammals, reptiles and amphibians. In this way, the Burrowing Owl may be able to serve as an indicator species for its habitat.

And finally, information on the local and regional distributions of Burrowing Owls may inspire local and regional planning processes with regard to the issue of continued human population growth. It seems reasonable that comprehensive planning for growth may provide the only truly effective means of minimizing the adverse effects of continued human population growth on California's wildlife, native plants, and ecosystems.

The Institute for Bird Populations, therefore, has initiated and is coordinating a three-year census of the breeding populations of Burrowing Owls in California. The census methodology utilizes a GIS approach to define the habitat characteristics of the species, and has forged a cooperative partnership among the local chapters of the Audubon Society in carrying out the actual census. The census is being initiated during the 1991 breeding season in the greater San Francisco Bay Area and in the central part of the Great Central Valley, and will be expanded to the remainder of California during 1992 and 1993.

The 1991 census includes the area roughly bounded on the north by Sonoma, Napa, Yolo, Sacramento and El Dorado counties inclusive (about 39°N), on the south by Santa Cruz, Santa Clara, Merced and Mariposa counties inclusive (about 37°N), on the west by the Pacific Ocean, and on the east by the 2,000 foot elevation contour in the Sierra Nevada. A GIS is being used to map this entire area into four habitat favorability categories based on



various combinations of elevation and slope (as determined from Digital Elevation Map data), vegetation type or ground cover (as determined from LANDSAT satellite data), and the occurrences of irrigation canals and roads (as determined from Digital Line Graph data for hydrography and transportation). The habitat favorability categories are: (1) very favorable (Burrowing Owls likely to be present in substantial numbers), (2) favorable (owls probably present in moderate numbers), (3) marginally favorable (owls possibly present in very small numbers), and (4) unfavorable (owls very unlikely to be present).

This entire area (some 19,000 mi<sup>2</sup>) will then be divided into about 2,000 blocks, each 5 km (about 3.1 mi) on a side, that conform to the standard UTM grid, and that will be compatible with various county breeding bird atlases. A random stratified sample of about 400 of these blocks (about 20% of the total area) will then be selected based upon the habitat favorability types found in each block (as determined from the GIS analysis), and these 400 blocks will be apportioned among the 13 local chapters of the Audubon Society that are located within this area, about 30 blocks per chapter. Coordinators have been chosen from each of the 13 chapters and will assign these blocks to cooperating individuals from their chapter who will each be responsible for censusing one (or more) blocks. Thus, about 20% of the total area will be censused in such a manner that we will be able to use GIS information to make valid statistical extrapolations to an estimate of the total number of breeding owls in the entire census area.

The observers will attempt to cover their entire 5 km by 5 km block once during early morning (sunrise to 10 AM) or late afternoon (4 PM to sunset) hours sometime during the 46 day

period from May 1 to June 15, 1991, when breeding Burrowing Owls will be feeding nestlings or recent fledglings. During this period, one or both parents are usually present at or near the mouth of the nest burrow during the early morning and late afternoon hours. Observers will provide a count of all owls seen in their block, an estimate of the number of nesting pairs, and a map showing the distribution of these birds. All observers will be provided with guidelines for censusing the owls, detailed maps of their blocks that show roads, irrigation canals and other physical features as well as habitat classifications, data sheets for recording their observations, and letters of introduction to aid in securing access to private property. The Institute for Bird Populations will also run two regional training sessions (one in the Bay Area and one in the Central Valley), to introduce and explain the censusing techniques to any interested cooperators.

The Geographic Information System (GIS) analyses are being performed at the GIS Laboratory associated with the Department of Geography at San Francisco State University. Ms. Rita Winkler, a student in the Department of Geography, is undertaking the GIS analysis as her Master's Thesis under the direction of Professors Patricia Foschi and Jerry Davis.

If you are interested in helping with this census by trying to cover one or more blocks near your home, please contact the local Audubon Society chapter, or contact Dave DeSante at The Institute for Bird Populations, P.O. Box 554, Inverness, CA 94937, (415) 669-1663. We welcome your assistance with this exciting and important new effort to help preserve California as a viable homeland for both humans and Burrowing Owls.

—DAVID F. DeSANTE

## LAST CHANCE FOR BAY BIRDATHON '91

We have given you plenty of warning. We brought you a celebrity endorsement from Margaret Morse Nice. We have appealed to your birding bravado and your conservation conscience. **THIS IS YOUR FINAL NOTICE!** Bay Birdathon '91, the joint effort of Golden Gate Audubon and Marin Audubon, will be history by 11:59 p.m. on April 20, and you will have missed it. Mono Lake, designated beneficiary of at least 80 percent of the Birdathon proceeds, will not have received your support. Please read the update in this issue on the plight of the Mono Lake ecosystem to find out how much your assistance is needed. Luckily for you, it is not too late. You can gather some pledges, go out in the field with a team and be a Birdathoner. If you are not a part of another team, join the Mines Roadrunners from MAS or Murphy's Mob from GGAS to be in on the April 20 event. If you cannot be a field participant, please support any or all of the Bay Birdathon '91 teams. **A HANDY PLEDGE FORM IS INCLUDED IN THIS ISSUE. FILL IT OUT, TEAR IT OUT AND MAIL IT IN.** For more information, please call Steve Margolin at 434-4262, extension 6005. Thank you for taking the last chance.

## BIRDATHON WITH MURPHY'S MOB

On Saturday, April 20, be one of the many observers (mob) who join Dan Murphy for a great day of birding on the San Francisco Peninsula. Build a day list of a hundred or more species, visit many of the Peninsula's greatest birding spots, get together with friends, join us for dinner at Celia's, and help GGAS in its major annual fund raiser. Did we mention your pledge per species?

Yes, your pledge per species is the way we raise money. Ask friends to pledge for each species we see. Remember that ten pledges of a dime each will earn \$1 per bird. Of course you are welcome to join us for any pledge of a dime or more per bird.

Meet at 7 a.m. at the parking lot up the hill from the Cliff House at the intersection of Merri Way and Great Highway in San Francisco.

From there we will caravan to Golden Gate Park, Lake Merced, the San Francisco Watershed, Mountain View and other spots on the Peninsula. We have seen about 110 species on each of the last two birdathons. We plan to stop for dinner around 7 p.m.

Wear layered clothing so you will be comfortable along the coast where it may be foggy and windy, or in the interior where it may be quite warm. Sun screen, lunch and liquids are necessary as well.

If you plan to join us for dinner at Celia's Mexican Restaurant please call Dan Murphy, 564-0074, during the week prior to the Birdathon.



## **YOSEMITE FIELDS BIRDATHON TEAMS**

A telephone inquiry from an enthusiastic Karen Allen brought us an offer to recruit teams of people working at Yosemite National Park for the Marin-Golden Gate Birdathon. The result:

The BUBO BRAINS—Karen Allen, Kristin Ramsey and John McConnell, the YELLOW-BELLIED YELLOW-LEGGED YAPSUCKERS—Julie Stoughton and Brendan White. They show up on the pledge form as the Yosemite Team, but you can specify either or both.

## **HELP MONITOR A BANK SWALLOW COLONY**

The Bank Swallows will return to the Fort Funston colony in early April. This year the National Park Service plans to take action to preserve the nesting cliffs from human impact and to inform the public about the swallow colony. They need your help. GGAS has been asked to provide volunteers to spend a few hours at the swallow colony each weekend. Volunteers will get an opportunity to learn more about Bank Swallows and to test their knowledge against their observations at the colony. They will also be able to meet the public to provide information about this threatened species and help protect the fragile nesting cliffs at Fort Funston. For information please call GGAS office, 843-2222.

## **COME LEARN RAPTORS**

The Golden Gate Raptor Observatory (GGRO) is a group of volunteers (more than 100) dedicated to studying and en-

joying the fall flight of 19 species of birds of prey over the Marin Headlands. The GGRO is seeking volunteers to commit one day every two weeks from August through December 1991 and some time evenings and weekends in training.

If you want to learn, finally, to identify the hawks, falcons and eagles of California, and if you want to be part of a long-term wildlife conservation project, then please attend a GGRO orientation meeting either Thursday, April 25 at 7 p.m. or Saturday April 27 at 10 a.m. The meetings will be at GNRA Headquarters, Building 201, Upper Fort Mason, San Francisco. Call Allen Fish, 331-0730, for information.

## **OPPORTUNITY— With House**

The California Academy of Sciences Pepperwood Ranch Natural Preserve seeks unpaid land steward to live in a house on the preserve in exchange for duties performed on the preserve. For information please write Pepperwood Ranch Natural Preserve, 3450 Franz Valley Road, Santa Rosa, CA 95404.

## **BARROW'S GOLDENEYE AT LAKE MERRITT**

Totally unexpected as one drives through downtown Oakland, a large beautiful lake suddenly stretches out before you—Lake Merritt. Although this 155 acre salt water estuary is in the middle of the largest city in the east bay, it is a complete and fairly healthy ecosystem. It is home to many kinds of invertebrates, several species of fish, a heron rookery, site of California's first wildlife refuge (1870), and, October

through March, a birder's paradise (the recent Christmas count noted 58 different bird species). Besides more than 10 species of overwintering ducks, several kinds of grebes, gulls, geese and herons, occasional loons, sandpipers and terns—with total numbers sometimes in the thousands—this lake is the best spot in the Bay Area to see the elusive Barrow's Goldeneye.

Barrow's Goldeneye (*Bucephala islandica*), one of two goldeneye species—is a mid-size diving duck of the tribe Aythyini named after their tiny bright yellow eyes. The males of both species of goldeneye have elegant black and white plumage, each with iridescent color glosses on their heads (purple in the Barrow's, green in the Common). For the males, recognition in the field is based on differently shaped white spots between the bill and eye (crescent shaped in the Barrow's, oval in the Common), and a line of white spots found only on the back of the Barrow's. Females of the species appear identical, especially at a distance. However, if seen fairly close, you might recognize the relative differences in bill shape and color and head shape. Barrow's Goldeneye is named in honor of Sir Joseph Barrow (1764–1848), the British explorer and geographer of the great age of natural science exploration.

One of the features that makes birding at Lake Merritt so much fun (and a bird photographer's dream) is the chance to see the ducks, herons, coots, grebes and gulls at such close range. The scaups, canvasbacks, goldeneye and mallards seem tame as 50–60 noisily queue up at the Nature Center for their daily grain ration, the closest ones right at your feet. A chance to see either of the goldeneye, with their elegant, satiny

black and white finery at this range is a real treat.

During the winter one can also see the courtship displays of the goldeneye, as they prepare for mating later in the spring at their breeding grounds. Males and females pair off and swim close together, males throwing their heads backward as the females thrust their heads forward. In general, behavior of the two goldeneye species at the lake does not differ very much: they swim individually or in small groups of both sexes, or unceremoniously dive to the shallow lake bottom for their diet of mollusks, crustaceans or plant food.

Rex Burrell, a naturalist at the Lake Merritt Rotary Nature Center and long-time observer of duck populations at the lake, says that, in general, goldeneye numbers have been increasing over the last 70 years. For example, the 1923 Christmas Count showed no goldeneye of either species at all, while in 1934 Commons were at 75 with Barrow's not found. In 1980, however, 324 Commons were observed, with only 11 Barrow's. In 1989 there was a three-to-one ratio between the species (59 Common, 21 Barrow's). Last year's Christmas Count showed the Common species five times more numerous than Barrow's (75 to 15). Rex believes some birds may have been missed at the last count, with actual numbers in the range of 200 Common to 40 Barrow's. Given the more northerly winter distribution of the Barrow's, the Common Goldeneye have presumably always been more prevalent at the lake.

Part of the excitement of seeing Barrow's Goldeneye for me is remembering what an ordeal it was to see them (or not see them) back east. I vividly recall the winter about five years ago when I stood at the edge of a lagoon in

Rye, N.Y., scanning mixed flocks of ducks with my scope. It was a bitterly cold, overcast day, about 20 degrees, with a fierce wind off the sound making the apparent temperature closer to zero. I slowly scanned the flocks of Common Goldeneye, scaup and Canvasbacks, tears streaming down my cheeks from the wind, cold numbing my fingers and freezing my scope's focusing mechanism, hoping against hope that hidden in the flocks would be the coveted Barrow's. Needless to say, I didn't see them. *Here*, last November, walking on the edge of Lake Merritt in my shirtsleeves, in what Californians call "winter" (sun blazing away, runners in tiny jogging shorts), I noticed my first beautiful male Barrow's, swimming serenely not more than 80 feet away.

No one knows exactly what it is about Lake Merritt that makes it such a great spot to see wintering Barrow's Goldeneye; a combination of sheltered water and abundant food supplies, no doubt. It may be that goldeneye have wintered at the lake for many thousands of years, and the lake's history of wildlife protection of the last century has just allowed that tradition to continue. This is a wonderful example of wildlife conservation, if true. I hope by the time this *Gull* appears, not every goldeneye Barrow's or not—will be gone, and readers will have a chance to see these beautiful waterfowl. If not, next year, as the days shorten and there's a chill to the air, you can count on them to return to Lake Merritt.

—TED PIERCE

## BACK YARD BIRDER

Meg Pauletich's column was delayed in the mail. It will be back again in *The GULL* for May.

## OUR MONTH AT THE RANCH

The month of May is an exciting time at Audubon Canyon Ranch. And this year our chapter has been designated as weekend hosts for that month. We need volunteers for all the Saturdays and Sundays in May, as well as Monday, May 27—Memorial Day. Volunteering involves being treated like visiting royalty at the Ranch for the small price of spending a few hours greeting incoming guests and informing them about trails, activities and parking. Please call the office, 843-2222, to volunteer for this pleasant and helpful activity.

## WHAT THE BOARD DID

At its meeting in February a board member suggested that membership has little information about what the GGAS board is doing. To begin to correct that lack, the following is excerpted from the minutes of the board meeting of January 28, 1991:

**Passed** a motion expressing dissatisfaction with NAS' new logo and asking that it be phased out this year.

**Passed** a motion to decline sponsorship with Lawrence Hall of Science of a presentation by the Tyrells on Hummingbirds of the Caribbean.

**Referred** to the Finance Committee a request from NAS for funding support of the Western Regional Office.

**Passed** a motion authorizing a donation of \$200 towards legal action on the Aleutian Canada Goose "delisting."

**Referred** to Finance Committee a request for donation toward Burrowing Owl Survey. (see page 63)

**Passed** a motion to pledge financial support for the proposed Audubon State Lobbyist (see *The GULL* for January, p. 1); asked Finance Committee to propose source of funds.

## NEWS FROM THE RANCH

### HAVE YOU BEEN TO THE RANCH YET?

Now is the time to visit ACR. The Bolinas Lagoon Preserve is open to the public. The trails should be at their prime, birds are on territory and singing, the wildflowers are at their peak, and with just the right amount of rain, the hills are green. Don't forget to check the marsh for newts, and stop for a few moments in the bird blind. Oh, and don't forget the heronry. Spend as long as you want watching the breeding behavior of our Great Egrets. As I write, Great Blue Herons have not yet established nests, although there have been many observations of herons in the canyon.

## SPRING SEMINARS

You can explore our Bouverie Preserve, Cypress Grove and other Tomales Bay Properties, and our Bolinas Lagoon Preserve. On **May 4** John Kelly and John Petersen will introduce you to the ecology of bird song at the Bouverie Audubon Preserve (\$20). On **May 18** you will have to be in two places at once unless you can choose between the 7th Annual Downhill Hike at the Bolinas Lagoon Preserve with Ray Peterson (\$20), or the Natural History of Tomales Bay with John Kelly (\$20). Ray Peterson will head our annual butterfly counts on **June 29** in Marin County, and on **June 30** in Sonoma County (\$5). Included in the count is the **June 26**, "Getting-to-Know-The-Critters Night."

Of very special interest to educators is our July 15-19 workshop, "natural History for Teachers." Our ACR naturalists will lead this workshop which will focus on instructional information

and teaching techniques for elementary school teachers. The \$175 fee includes 3 semester units. Do register early for this popular workshop.

You can register for any workshop weekdays between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. at (415) 868-9244.

It may not be too late to sign-up for one of our free Guided Nature Walks at the Bouverie Audubon Preserve. Saturdays, April 13 & 27, and May 11 & 25 will be the last dates to enjoy BAP this season. You must register for trips no later than the Wednesday prior to the date of the trip. However, most trips are filled well in advance. To register please call us at (707) 938-4554.

## MARIN ISLANDS NATIONAL REFUGE?

The ACR Board of Directors unanimously supports the protection and acquisition of the Marin Islands. These little north bay islands are among our area's most important heronries; and the nearby mudflats and tidelands are significant feeding areas. Since the entire area is for sale, we join with our sponsoring Audubon Chapters, other conservation organizations and several public agencies in supporting its purchase and eventual designation as the Marin Island National Wildlife Refuge. Please join us in helping raise \$500,000 in private donations for this very worthy cause. Check with your Audubon Chapter or contribute directly through:

Tom Martens

Trust for Public Land/West Marin Islands  
116 New Montgomery, 3rd. Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94105

—DAN MURPHY



**CALIFORNIA  
ENDANGERED  
SPECIES  
CAMPAIGN**


There are more than 280 California wildlife species facing the threat of extinction. You can help them survive by filling in "Line 50" on your State Tax Return. Even a little helps a lot, so please do what you can.

**FIELD TRIP REPORT**

A GGAS trip feb. 13 to Coyote Hills Regional Park was led by Jean-Marie Spoelman and Anna Wilcox. In sunny, warm weather they and ten participants heard four and saw 44 species, including ten duck species, four raptor species. A Great Horned Owl was seen on its nest.

**GIFTS and BEQUESTS**
**FOR GGAS**

**In Memory of**  
Ted Dement

Doris Dunn  
Fred Hellman

**In Honor of the Birthday of**  
Dorothy Cahill

**Gift of**  
Marc Ordman  
William P. Mueller

Gertrude Bialos  
GGAS Board of Directors  
Gertrude Bialos  
Gertrude Bialos

Gertrude Allen

The Society welcomes gifts in general or gifts in honor of or in memory of relatives and friends. Such gifts will be used as specified by the donor or, if unspecified, at the discretion of the GGAS Board of Directors. This includes their use for general GGAS activities or for special programs of the Society including Audubon Canyon Ranch of which GGAS is a sponsor. Please send your gift in the form of a check made out to Golden Gate Audubon Society, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G, Berkeley, CA 94702. All gifts are tax deductible. The Society is also appreciative of any bequests. Such bequests should specify as recipient the Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. All gifts, donations and bequests will be acknowledged in *The Gull* as well as personally on behalf of the Society by the Secretary.



Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc.  
Office: 843-2222  
2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G  
Berkeley, California 94702

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THE GULL

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AUDUBON CANYON RANCH BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Bruce Walker, ex officio  
Nicki Spillane

Dan Murphy  
Bruce Howard

**NORTHERN CALIFORNIA RARE BIRD ALERT (recorded) (415) 528-0288  
Update: 524-5592**

**Mail for all individuals listed above should be sent to GGAS office.**

Send address changes to office promptly; Post office does not forward *THE GULL*. Monthly meetings: second Thursday, 7:30 p.m.  
Joint membership — local and national \$30 per year (individual); \$38 (family); includes *AUDUBON* Magazine and *THE GULL*; to  
join, make checks payable to National Audubon Society and send to GGAS office to avoid delay in receiving *THE GULL*. Membership  
renewals should be sent directly to the National Audubon office. Subscriptions to *THE GULL* separately \$10 per year; single issues  
\$1. High school and college student membership \$18 per year. Senior citizen individual \$21, senior citizen family \$23. Associate  
Membership in Golden Gate Audubon Society, \$10 per year.

The Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. was established January 25, 1917,  
and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948.

The *Gull* deadline is the first of the month for the following month, and July 15th for September issue.